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# Joint Legislative Audit and Review Committee (JLARC)

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December 31, 2002

TO: Members of the Joint Legislative Audit and Review Committee

FROM: Valerie Whitener, Research Analyst  
 Eric Thomas, Research Analyst

SUBJECT: **Follow-up Report – 2000 Division of Child Support Performance Audit**

At the Committee's direction, we completed a performance audit of the Department of Social and Health Services, Division of Child Support (DCS) in 2000 to provide the Legislature with information about the performance and funding of Washington's child support system. JLARC made four recommendations to DCS:

1. Improve cost-recovery of outstanding child support payments;
2. Prioritize DCS staff resources;
3. Develop performance measures; and
4. Set goals and develop strategies for specific indicators.

Over the past two years DCS has provided JLARC staff with interim reports describing the agency's progress in implementing these recommendations. Attached is a table summary provided by DCS that illustrates the results of their efforts.

Overall, DCS has made progress in developing methods to prioritize their staff resources (*Recommendation 2*). Given the strong likelihood of reduced staff resources in the coming biennium, these efforts should mitigate the programmatic impacts of such reductions. Measurable progress has also been made on those five additional performance measures that JLARC recommended (*Recommendation 3*), with DCS now accountable for its performance on them. Finally, with regard to setting goals and developing strategies for those performance indicators that JLARC highlighted in 2000, good progress has been made to implement Recommendation 4.

However, DCS reports that implementation of JLARC Recommendation 1—to administer and collect fees to recover part of the administrative costs of collecting support for **non-public assistance clients**—would not be cost-effective for the state. Since other states have found such efforts to be cost-effective, JLARC may wish to further review the agency's conclusions regarding implementation of this recommendation in the future.

Finally, JLARC staff have begun work on a related Committee-sponsored study, to do follow-up work on JLARC's previous WorkFirst studies. One element in our proposed work will be to look at the impact of improved child support collections on the overall performance of the WorkFirst effort.

Attachment1

Attachment2